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LIBERTY

OF THE

PRESS.



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Printed by W. Woodcock in St. Paul

Published for the Proprietors

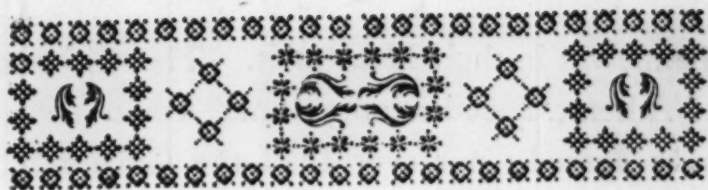
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HE various Definitions of the Word
LIBERTY, may convince us with
what Attention it has been con-
sidered in all Ages, and by all Na-
tions; consequently of what Importance it has
been esteemed to the Happiness of Mankind.
The Variety of Opinions concerning it does
not proceed from any Uncertainty in the Na-
ture of the Subject, but from the different
Forms it assumes under different Constitutions
of Government. Republicks, whether De-
mocracies or Aristocracies, must differ among
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themselves in their Ideas of it. The Citizens of Athens, Lacedæmon, Rome, could never have agreed, nor ever shall the Citizens of Holland, Genoa, or Venice, agree in any one Definition of it. In Monarchies it varies according to the Measure of Power possessed by the Sovereign; but in these happy Kingdoms, by the peculiar Excellence of our Constitution, it is fixed and ascertained. It consists in being governed by Laws, which it had a certain Share in enacting. Every Briton, who gives a Vote in electing a Member of Parliament, virtually enacts those Laws, by which he consents hereafter to be governed. From this inestimable Privilege arises another, hardly less valuable, by which he is empowered to give his Opinion; to express his Approbation or Dislike of any Measure, that regards the publick Safety.

SUCH are the Principles, thus simple and full of Dignity, upon which our Ancestors founded the noblest System of political Liberty, that ever blessed Mankind. But our modern

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modern Patriot disdains to be confined. *Æstuat angusto limite mundi.* He has nobler and more enlarged Ideas of British Freedom. He enters into the Cabinet; fixes the Boundaries of the Sovereign's Prerogatives; appoints his Ministers, Ambassadors, Generals; directs the Destination of our Fleets and Armies; declares War; forms impracticable Plans of Peace, and fore-knows Events, that can never come to pass: then appeals to the People in an enflamed Declamation; professes his pure, disinterested Zeal for their Service, and swears, in scraps of Greek and Roman Learning, that our Country is our greatest God; our best, our dearest Parent; and that the Love of it includes all the Passions, Affections, Duties and Charities of human Life.

ENCOURAGED by that Impunity, with which he hath outraged his Sovereign, insulted his Ministers, and violated every Form of publick Duty and Decency, our Patriot-Writer now violently breaks in upon the Security and Happiness of domestick Life. *Nam sævus aper-*

tam in rabiem verti cæpit, — & per honestas ire minax impune domos. Whoever are known to live in personal Friendship and Esteem with a Minister, instantly become Objects of the Patriot's Wrath; but if they be supposed to approve of the Measures of his Administration, their Reputation is put to the Torture by the Malevolence of Obloquy and Slander; their Persons are distorted by that new-invented Species of painting, called Caricatura. The Peculiarities of their Manners, Tempers or Drefs are made the Sport of Buffoonery and Ridicule; their Ancestors are sacrilegiously torn out of their Graves to acknowledge Crimes, they never committed, and their Posterity, yet unborn, are blasted with more than the Curse of original Sin.

But these Writers — may they not be justly apprehensive of Reprisals? Their Patrons too, though they themselves have none, may possibly have Fathers, Mothers, Ancestors, worth waking from the Dead to fill the History of a weekly Paper. Even they themselves may
have

have Persons, Gestures, and Complexions, that might easily be given up to Laughter. No. The writer of these Papers disclaims this horrid Warfare; more shocking, more dishonourable to Humanity, than the Cruelties of Savages. Never let such licentiousness assume the Name of Liberty.

WERE a Foreigner to read this last Paragraph would he not exclaim with Wonder and Indignation, what a Race of Barbarians! Who have neither Laws to preserve the Majesty of their Prince from Outrage and Insult: his Ministers from Obloquy and unmerited Reproach, or the Characters of their private Citizens from Scandal and Defamation! Would it not increase his Wonder to be told, that in no other Country, the most civilized in Europe, is the Majesty of the Sovereign more sincerely revered; his Person more beloved; his Virtues more gratefully acknowledged? that in no other Country, are the Laws more just in punishing even an Attempt against a Life so dear, so inestimably

timably dear, to his People ; none more wisely constituted to guard him from that more direful Assassination; the murder of his Fame?

BUT the Timidity of some Ministers, who wanted Spirit to ascertain the Bounds between Licentiousness and Liberty; the just Contempt, with which others treated these libellous Politicians, and their Reliance upon the good understanding of our People (a national Character,) were among the Causes, which established an Opinion, that the Liberty of the Press was uncontrollable. An Opinion, which weak Men alone could believe, but of which wicked Men have made a most shameless Misuse. Witness the Books of Irreligion and Immorality, which a good Man cannot read without Horrour, and which only the most abandoned could have written.

BUT leaving the Care of Religion, *deorum curæ diis curæ*, to the Gentlemen of a certain Profession, who are supposed, I know not how justly, better to understand its Interests,

as

as indeed they are somewhat more interested than Laymen in its Preservation, let us resume the proper Subject of these Papers.

It is not easy to imagine what Ideas our political Authors can have conceived of Liberty in general, when they tell us, that any one particular Branch of it, perhaps the most capable of doing Mischief to the State, is not to be restrained or bounded by those universal Rules of Subjection and Obedience, which constitute the very Nature of Government. Natural Liberty is that of Individuals; social Liberty is that of the Community. The first is authorised in attempting whatever it has Force to execute. The second is confined by Rules of Reason, Equity, Morality and the Laws of Property. When every Man may act as he pleases, he may be opposed in every Action by the mere good pleasure of every other Man. The Consequence is Anarchy and the Dissolution of Society. Liberty, therefore, well defined, is Obedience to Laws. To live according to the Dictates of unrestrained Impulse and

and Appetite is Slavery ; the Slavery of Savages.

BUT supposing the Press is never to be subjected to those Laws, to which we intrust our dearest Interests of Religion and Property, yet whom shall we appoint the Guardians of this Palladium of British Liberty ? Whom shall we consecrate to the divine Office of watching over this Vestal, this eternal Fire ? Who is worthy to stand at the Altar in the Temple of Liberty, and minister to the People ? Surely not these fiery Zealots, these Enthusiasts, whose first principles of Politicks are an Opposition to Ministers ; who hold it their Duty, supposing them sincere, to spread abroad the Alarms of Fears, Suspensions, Jealousies, more especially in critical Situations ; in times of War and Danger.

THESE are general Reflexions, nor should they be particularly applied. Several Persons have been named either as Patrons or Writers in the present ill-timed, unjustifiable Attack

tack on one of the Ministers. I will not offend any good Man by supposing him capable of engaging in such a Design, or suspect any Gentleman of encouraging that most illiberal manner, in which it has hitherto been prosecuted. I would not affront a Man of Genius, by believing him a Writer in the phlegmatick Dullness of the Monitor, or the petulant vivacity of the North Briton, though sometimes mistaken for Wit. Impossible ! Yet such a Man of Genius has been named, as the Writer of the North Briton *. If possible that this Gentleman could write so infinitely beneath his Character, how must we compassionate the Indigence, (the poor Apothecary's Plea for selling Poison,) that has compelled him to the Prostitution of no common Talents ? How must we lament, the perversion of his Genius from Poetry to Politicks ?

I WILL not hazard any Conjectures concerning our present Writers. Let them enjoy their

* The Author of the Rosciad.

Obscurity. Light is painful to Creatures, that delight in Darknefs. Yet I hope the Reader will permit me to recollect the Characters of their Predecessors, for fifty Years past, in Patriotism and publick Spirit. Perhaps there may be some resemblance between them, that may direct us to form a temperate, unprejudiced Judgement of the patriot Virtues of their present Successors.

AT the latter end of Queen Anne's Reign, a Person, most eminently qualified for such an Office, was employed by the Ministry to write in Defence of their Administration. He was not only the greatest, but indeed the only original Genius of his Age. He had improved a natural and copious Vein of Humour by all the studied Arts of Irony and Ridicule. To the laughing Indolence of Horace, he had joined the sanguinary Spirit of Juvenal. Nor was he more distinguished by these extraordinary Talents, than by an inborn Spleen of Temper and a virulent Rage of Party. He had made his first political Appearance

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pearance upon Whig principles, indeed more worthy of his Understanding and Abilities, but disappointed, or rather unsatisfied in his Expectations, he now sacrifices to Ambition and his Hopes of a Mitre. He transfers the Principles of the Whigs to the support of the Jacobites. He publishes a weekly Paper and declares for Liberty and the Constitution, while he is impiously labouring to betray them both to the vilest Slavery both of Soul and Body; to the equal Absurdity of passive Obedience and Transubstantiation.

THUS ended the writing Patriotism of the Reign of Queen Anne, when that ingenious Madman, the Duke of Wharton opened the Reign of George the first. His Grace appeared in the great World with all Advantages of Birth and Fortune, and every promise of great Abilities. Had he been happily possessed of only common Courage and common Sense, he might have been an Honour, and a Blessing to his Country. He lived many Years the Contempt of Europe,

through which he wander'd a Vagabond, a Beggar and a Traytor. He died in the Infamy, in which he lived. From Instances like these, we might be tempted to say of Parts and Abilities what Tacitus does of Gold and Silver: *argentum & aurum propitii an irati dii negaverint, dubito*. Yet his Grace was a Patriot profess'd, and a weekly Champion for the Cause of Liberty in a Paper called the True Briton.

FROM the noble Duke the care of the Press and the Constitution, *ne quid detrimenti capiat*, descended to Lord Bo--ng---ke. This Nobleman was another signal Instance of great Talents most miserably abused. His knowledge of Books was the reading of a Pedant, not the learning of a Scholar, or a Gentleman. In his Philosophy, though loose and unprincipled, he was a Dogmatist. In his religious Disputations, of which he was exuberantly fond, he was an Enthusiast in Infidelity. In his Politicks, if we may be permitted to use an Image and Expression taken from

from the Latin Tongue, he might justly have been called the * *Defultor* of Party. When in Ministry, he engaged in a formed Design of placing an abjured Pretender on the Throne of these Realms. He afterwards entered into the personal Service of this Pretender, for which direct and open Treason, he pleads the Violence of his Passions, and the natural Effects of a too warm Resentment. Such are the pleas of Highwaymen and Assassins. Whether by the Clemency of his Majesty, or the Merit of some secret Services while his Lordship was Secretary of State to the Pretender, (a double Traytor,) he obtains his Pardon; returns to England, and opens an Opposition to Sir Robert Walpole, upon Principles of Liberty and the Constitution. His Hatred of the Minister is the Love of his Country, and the Destruction of one Man is publick Spirit. Besides writing a thousand occasional Pamphlets, he becomes the great Author of the Craftsman.

* *Defultor belli civilis.*

ANIMATED by the same generous, honourable, and laudable Principles, a Commoner of great parliamentary Abilities, entered into political Friendship and Alliance with the noble Lord. The war was declared *pro aris & focis*, to be afterwards carried on, by the High contracting Powers, with the utmost Vigour & *totis viribus*, in all its Parts. The Destruction of the Minister was the secret Article of the Treaty. Then, punctual to their Engagements, while his Lordship was instructing the People in the Powers of the Constitution, his very faithful Ally was endeavouring, in many a vehement Declamation, to persuade their Representatives to urge those Powers to the Removal of the Minister. These Declamations were animated by the classical Sentiments of publick Virtue, which had been impressed upon his Imagination by reading the Greek and Roman Authors in his Youth, and which still remained upon his Memory.

I mention this last Instance of *modern Patriotism* with Reluctance. I am compelled by
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the Necessity of my Subject. However, his Days of Patriotism are of ancient Date. He is not engaged in our present political Disputes. I cannot therefore be apprehensive, that what I have said of him will be considered as a Violation of that Decency, due to the Publick. What, will be History to morrow, cannot be Invektive to day. Let me acknowledge too, that I feel, as sensibly as any of my Readers, the Tedioufness of drawing Characters, so frequently exposed to publick View, and repeating Facts so universally known. Yet it seemed necessary once more to recall them to the Attention of the Publick, because, from them, and their Example, our present illustrious Race of Writers seem to derive all the Rights and Privileges, they so worthily maintain. Their Honours too, their Titles seem to descend to them from the same Source, in a litterary Line of Inheritance. They call themselves Patriots, Guardians of publick Liberty, Assertors of the Rights of human kind. But besides these splendid Titles, they exercise all the political Virtues of their Predecessors.

The

The same free-born Insolence to Kings; the
same Abhorrence of Ministers;

I from my soul sincerely hate
Both Kings and Ministers of State.

Their Professions of pure, disinterested Zeal
for the Constitution are as ardent, and un-
questionably as sincere, as those of a Wharton,
a Swift, a Bolingbroke, or a P——y. In
earnest Imitation of these excellent Examples
of moral, as well as political Virtue, is there
a Species of Falsehood, which a bold Im-
agination can invent, or a Baseness of Heart
can assert, that they have not attempted? Is
there an Artifice, I mean according to the
Measure of their Abilities, that tends to de-
ceive, to divide and to enflame, which they
have not practised with all of Swift's personal
Virulence and Spleen, and certainly not
without a large Proportion of that Dullness,
which even Swift himself could not always
escape?

How-

HOWEVER, in Justice to their Ingenuity, let it be acknowledged, that of their own pure Invention, and in aid to all future Oppositions; these Authors have made no inconsiderable Addition to the Catalogue of ministerial Sins. They have sagaciously found out, that to deserve their Sovereign's Esteem, or enjoy a greater Share of his Confidence, are Crimes in a Minister, that threaten the Subversion of our excellent Constitution. But if the King from a long Acquaintance with his Virtue; a personal Experience of his Integrity, and an high Opinion of his Abilities, should appoint him to an Employment in the Administration, the very Appointment becomes an Act of Tyranny in the Prince, and the Acceptance of such an Employment is Treason in the Minister. From whence it follows, in wise and happy Consequence for the Nation, that a Man of Abilities must never be employed in the Service of his Country, if he be honoured with the personal Affection and Esteem of his Sovereign. But let him be

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called

called a Favourite, and all other bad Names are unnecessary; the Charge of every other Crime is insignificant. The new-invented term of *Favouritism* undoubtedly includes every idea of Weakness in the Prince; of Worthlessness and Wickedness in his Favourite.

YET the noble Lord, at whom the Patriot aims these Terrours of Favouritism, is charged with other Crimes; that of his Mistake in being born on the other Side of a certain River, and having some of his Countrymen, whom it is not perfectly safe to take by the Hand. These, undoubtedly, though not absolutely Sins against Nature, it must be confessed are ministerial Crimes. There is yet another, for in vain were the Attempt to conceal it. Scotland does not pay an equal Proportion to the Land-Tax with England, and therefore his Lordship is not qualified to be a Minister.

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HAD I not impartially mentioned these Errours, his Friends, for he has Friends, would have insinuated, that the Opposition has paid him a most involuntary Compliment, and therefore most sincere, in not accusing him of any real, political, ministerial Crimes. It would have been said, that the best intentioned, and most sagacious Malice had not been able to reproach him with any one Vice, that can injure his Character, either as a man, or a Gentleman. In Truth, his Lordship has hardly any political Character; very little matter for the Panegyrick of his Friends, except the Conquest of Martinico; our Hopes of the Havanah, and his early Declaration against a continental War. There is still less Matter in his Character, to employ the Wit and Ingenuity of his Enemies. No apprehensions for the Safety of publick Credit; no Complaints among the Merchants, that their Trade is not sufficiently protected; no ill-planned, successless Expeditions, since his entrance into Ministry, and surely he has had an honour-

nable Share of those *decisive Skirmishes* in Germany, which were the Glory of the last Administration; those important Victories, that determine the Possession of the Field of Battle, upon which they are gained.

BUT even these Honours he shares, at present, or seems to share with the rest of the Ministry. Yet if he should hereafter assume that Power of guiding all the Operations of Government, from which the Constitution hath lately escaped, then let him be singly answerable, not for his own Errours only, but for those of others, and in general for every Misfortune, that may befall the State. If ever he should change the private Virtues of his Character into publick Vices; if his domestick Œconomy should become a national Diffipation and Profusion; if Ambition and the Love of Power should pervert his Heart, and overpower his Understanding, then let the Vengeance of Patriotism, and the unrestrained

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LIBERTY of the PRESS, united, fall upon his Head.

BUT the very seeming of Praise and Panegyrick is as justly to be suspected of Insincerity, as the Foulness of Calumny and Defamation. Let me therefore return to my Subject and confess, that Foreigners have indeed conceived as exalted Ideas of the LIBERTY of the BRITISH PRESS, as any of our own most zealous Writers, and probably from their Information. An ingenious foreign Author lays it down as a self-evident Proposition; as a Maxim, which will not admit of a Dispute, and which he therefore does not condescend to support with either Facts or Arguments, that *Un acte du Parlement, qui attenteroit a la Liberté de la Presse, porteroit a la Constitution un plus rude coup, qu'un acte, qui permettoit une augmentation de 6000 Hommes.** Another Quotation from this ingenious Writer, will convince

* MES PENSE'ES. N. 353.

us, that he was as little acquainted with the Temper and Manners of our People, as with our Constitution of Government. *De quel front un Homme, qui vingt ans de suite a declamé contre le cour, ose-t-il parler pour le Roy? Ces variations deshonorent parmi nous: en Angleterre on en rit; & PULTNEY, devenu MILORD BATH, & zélé partisan du Ministère, ne perd point l'estime Publique.* MES PENSEES. N°. 359. Is there then a Crime, that, in every other Country, would be justly branded with Infamy, and is it only laughed at in Britain? The double Perfidy, the Breach at once of both private and publick Engagements, was it not attended with Dishonour? Did this Gentleman, after twenty Years declaiming against the Court, did he become a Lord, and a *zealous Partizan* for the Ministry, and was he only an Object of Ridicule? Did he not lose the publick Esteem? His Lordship is conscious, and I dare to believe has Candour enough to confess, that although he was indeed laughed at in many of the best Odes,
ever

ever written since the Days of Horace, yet was he stigmatized by the Disesteem — no; by the universal Detestation and Contempt of his Country.

LET Foreigners, however, conceive, as they please, of the Liberty of the British Press, yet I could heartily wish, that our own Authors would fix and ascertain its Boundaries among themselves. The Monitor very lately gave up its Liberty, when he hallooed the Mob, these Patriots, those Friends of Freedom, to the Destruction of a poor Newswriter, the Gazetteer, for abusing the LIBERTY of the PRESS, by printing something, not too respectable to the Character of Mr. P---. The Newswriter, exclaimed aloud, and justly exclaimed, against that Licentiousness, of which he is lately become an Advocate most zealous. A late pains-taking Collector and Annotator upon the political Dullness of the Week, who writes himself JOHN CÆSAR WILKES Esq; has the following most judicious Remark upon

upon one of his Brethren: *We must give it as our Opinion, that his Performance is much fitter for the Executioner's Lash, than the Critick's.* There are Instances, therefore, in which the Hangman may be properly employed to correct the political Errata of the Press, without injuring its Liberty, and each of these Authors candidly disclaims for his Brethren those uncontrollable Privileges, which he asserts for himself. Thus the Printer of the Gazetteer has quitted the mechanical Occupation of correcting the Press for the generous and liberal Art of writing in its Defence. After having very elegantly called the Press, *the Palladium* of all Liberty, he gives us the following Sentiments.

“ Though the LIBERTY of the PRESS be
 “ a Term yet unascertained and undefined,
 “ yet there is enough understood by it to
 “ intimidate any Power in these Kingdoms,
 “ from too strongly interfering in it, tho’
 “ any daring Abusers of it may at all Times
 “ be punished. Gazetteer. 4. August.”

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LET us now suppose, that Government should take Advantage of these mutual Confessions, and order a Prosecution against the Authors of some Papers, lately published. They must appear in Evidence against each other (a Kind of general Self-conviction) and although *the Liberty of the Press be a Term yet unascertained and undefined*, yet the Nature of Libels is clearly understood, and the Punishment due to them is in the Justice of a Jury. Suppose therefore, that the Monitor's Reverence — Heaven guard the Church! should give his own and Mr. B——'s Mob an Holiday at Charing Cross: suppose the North Briton, or even an *honourable* Gentleman, who, as it is said, has declared himself the Patron of that Paper, should be condemned upon the Statute of Libels; could any of these *Accidents* affect the Freedom of the Nation, or the LIBERTY of the PRESS? Can they suffer by a just and equitable Execution of the Laws? Were they affected, when Woolston was punished for Blasphemy, or Shebeere was pilloried

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for Treason? Has the Press been less free; witness Yourselfs, ye Monitors and North Britons, has it been less licentious since that unhappy Period? Yet Shebeere was a Patriot; a Champion for Liberty; a Machiavel in Politicks; a Sidney on Government, and a Montesquieu on the Spirit of Laws. But so, indeed, are they all. All critically skilful in every Language, ancient and modern, as in their mother Tongue; equally knowing in every Art and Science, yet modestly professing only a profounder depth of Knowledge in the *arcana* of Government. What wonder, that with such Abilities, they should brave the Laws of their Country with Impunity, or with Ingenuity escape their Resentment?

PERHAPS, my Readers will expect, I should make an Apology for the Levity of this Paragraph. Indeed, perhaps I ought. Yet surely our Authors, who assume to themselves the unbounded LIBERTY of the PRESS, will not deny to others a good humoured,

moured, temperate Use of its Privileges,
 Is its Freedom confined only to Subjects
 of Sedition and Defamation? But is it pos-
 sible to separate the Ideas of Contempt, not
 ill expressed by Laughter, from the Cha-
 racters of such Writers—I speak only with
 regard to their literary Merit? Is it not, in
 Mr. Pope's Language, *beyond all Power of*
Face, to think, without laughing, of Mr,
 —, making Profession of Virtue (yes;
 the first and noblest Virtue of the human
 Heart, THE LOVE OF OUR COUNTRY,) or
 extending his Knowledge, as a Politician,
 through all the various Departments of Ad-
 ministration? If Politicks be a Science easily
 learned, whence do Ministers, in all Ages,
 commit such Blunders? Sir Robert Walpole
 was called *the Blunderer*. If it is not to be
 attained without Difficulty, whence are our
 Coffee-Houses crouded with such Adepts in
 the Science? The Government of Affairs in
 a great Nation; the Knowledge of its fo-
 reign Interests; the Direction of its Finances;
 and the Destination of its Fleets and Ar-
 mies,

Armies, are Objects, one might naturally imagine, worthy of the greatest human Abilities, improved by the most liberal Education, and a long Experience in Business. The different Offices in the State are given to different Persons, most eminent for their Abilities, and they apply those Abilities, each of them, to their own single Department,

YET here steps forth the Son of a Tradesman, at once a finished Statesman and Politician; at once supremely knowing in all the various Departments of Government. I have not called him the Son of a Tradesman in Contempt of his Birth, but with regard to the Meanness of Principles, and the Disadvantages of Education, unavoidable in a Tradesman's Family. Yet this young Man, unborn with the Spirit of a Gentleman, uneducated, inexperienced in Business, would direct a — in Administration; an HAWKE in a Sea-fight; a GRANBY at the Head of a Squadron, just going to charge the Enemy,

my, or an HALIFAX, in the Destination
of our Fleets.

IF this be the Character of the principal
Writer in our present political Contests,
what have the Friends of Liberty to hope,
what can its Enemies dread, from his Abili-
ties? “ But, Sir, the LIBERTY of the PRESS
“ — that Terroure of evil Ministers —
“ that Birthright of Britons, that Bulwark
“ of Liberty through all Ages.” — From
whence the North Briton dates this *Birth-*
right, I cannot tell, but he may certainly
number his *all Ages*, did they commence
with the Origin of the Press, upon less than
half the Arithmetick of his Fingers Ends.
Its political Liberty began in the last Cen-
tury, and was exerted by Fanaticism, Se-
dition, Treason and *Patriotism*, to erect an
opprobrious and oppressive Tyranny upon
the Ruins of the Constitution, both in
Church and State. But, still, *it is the Ter-*
rour of evil Ministers — No; a bold Mi-
nister will justly despise the LIBERTY of the
PRESS,

PRESS, while its Powers are thus feebly, as at present, exerted against him. A wicked one will find it his Interest to encourage such Writers against him, and will assume an Air of Lenity in suffering them to publish their crude, indigested Compositions. He knows, that the People are amused by this Appearance of Liberty, and that their Resentments, which might otherwise prove dangerous, pass away in the impotent Menaces of these Authors. Upon this reasoning, I shall not be surpris'd to find our present Race of Authors judiciously imputing to the noble Lord the Contempt, with which he treats them, as a Suspicion of some evil Design against the State.

THE first intention of these Papers was to represent to our political Writers the Danger to which they expos'd the LIBERTY of the PRESS, by a too licentious Abuse of its Privileges. I never flattered myself, that I could prevail upon their Rage of Patriotism to be less cruel in prosecuting this
 War

War of Barbarism. Yet I thought they should be advised not to provoke the Neglect or Indolence of Government too far, lest it might be tempted, however unjustly, to argue from the Abuse of the Press to its Destruction. Besides, I was really apprehensive, that the contemptible Impotence of Malice and Mischief, so apparent in our Authors, might bring the Press itself into Contempt. Never surely was any Character so impotently attacked, as that of Lord B---, or, in the Language of such Writers, never was so much Dirt thrown and so little able to stick. Perhaps, few other Reputations, with regard to their private Life, could have risen so pure and unstained from so much imputed Infamy.

I MENTION his Lordship with the utmost Reluctance; but I find it unavoidable. I cannot fairly represent the Licentiousness of these Authors, without mentioning the principal Object of it. I do not mean to write in his Defence, nor indeed has he
 been

been accused of any thing either worth denying or defending. Perhaps I mistake; and *happily* for our Patriot Writers, the News arrived, that the French had made themselves Masters of Newfoundland. Should I not ask Pardon of my Country for believing, that Englishmen can be thus impious, as to rejoice in a national Misfortune? Should I not ask Pardon of our common Humanity, for imagining, that human Creatures are capable of such Depravity? Yet the Expressions of their Triumph and Exultation, were by no means doubtful or equivocal. Then, the noble Lord was accused, *no doubt, most righteously*, not of Neglect or Inattention, but of down-right Perfidy, and betraying the Place to France.

SURELY, when these Authors imagine, that his Lordship is answerable for all the Errours of every Department in Government, they must suppose, that he hath assumed to himself, the Direction, Conduct, Guidance, call it by what Name yon please,
of

of the whole Administration. They still retain the Ideas of a prime, sole Minister, which, equally slavish as unconstitutional, were impressed upon these Assertors of Liberty under a late Reign, indeed a Monarchy, a Despotism, rather, of ministerial Power. But supposing, that the present Ministry were in general justly chargeable with this unhappy Event, yet certainly not the noble Lord in particular.

He hath not yet made any haughty Declaration of his presuming to exercise that unconstitutional Power of guiding all the Operations of Government. I have called it *unconstitutional*, for, with Mr. B----d's good Leave, the Constitution abhors the Idea of such a Power, as much as it disclaims the uncontrollable LIBERTY of the PRESS. However, had his Lordship, by his Interest, with his M---y prevailed on him to give that important Employment, to which, in a particular Manner, the Care of our foreign Settlements and Colonies is

signed; had he given this extensive and important Employment to a Scotsman of untried or doubtful Abilities; had he given it to a Brother, to a Lord T----e, he might then, not unjustly, have been answerable for every unfavourable Event. On the contrary, we may suppose, that he advised his M----y to give it to an *Englishman*; to the only Man (as I do not mean Flattery, so I hope I shall not offend) most worthy of it, and whose Abilities, if any other, are unquestionably equal to this great Employment, in its utmost Extent and Importance.

BUT, in Truth, this Misfortune cannot affect the present Ministry, for the Island was taken the Twenty fourth of June, not many Days, after Lord B---was appointed to the Treasury, and when Lord Anson was first Lord of the Admiralty. Neither does this Assertion mean to fix a Censure on the late Ministry, or to injure the Reputation of that Nobleman, who during many Years discharged his great Office with

with general Approbation; with unblemished Integrity; with considerable Abilities, and indefatigable Care. But really the Fate of this Island is somewhat unaccountable. Neither the French, nor we have ever regarded it, since it was ceded to us by the Treaty of Utrecht, with that Attention it deserved. They never made any attempt upon it, and all our different Ministers received and left it wholly defenceless. Neither Fortifications, nor Garrison. Should a Place of such Importance have been left by the late Minister (for this Gentleman has made himself answerable for every Event during his Administration) to the casual Succours by Sea, or to the uncertain watching the Enemy's Ships in their Ports? Should it not have had some internal Strength for its Security? We may judge of that Strength, by its surrendering without firing a Gun, to a thousand Frenchmen, and if they had attacked it at any Time since the Beginning of the War, they must equally have succeeded. Let us add, it

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would have been then far more difficult to dispossess them. But very probably they have already abandoned their Conquest; if not, the Squadron, sent out to retake the Place, may make them repent of their success in this last Effort of their Marine. We may then believe that our Ministry will be more attentive hereafter to its Preservation,

HAPPY for the Writer of this Paper, that he is prepared for the different Opinions, which, he is well assured, will be formed of him from this last Paragraph. He will be called a venal, ministerial Scribler, while the Minister, if ever he chance to hear of him, will be very little thankful for being idly and impertinently defended in an Affair, in which he is not the least concerned. However, let the generality of my Readers acknowledge, that the reasoning of this Paragraph hath naturally risen from the Subject I was considering (the LIBERTY of the PRESS and the Abuse of that Liberty) and I shall be perfectly satisfied.

fied. I mean to follow that Subject, unapprehensive of Consequences, as far as Truth and Decency shall lead my Reflections. Let me therefore be permitted to consider it in another Point of View.

THAT the Monitor opened this most illiberal Warfare, cannot be denied: that he is therefore justly chargeable with all the Scurrility and all the Petulance of the North Briton, must in fair Consequence be acknowledged; that whatever is blameable either in the Briton or the Auditor, certainly not to be justified, though greatly to be excused by the natural Warmth of a just Resentment, and the Laws of Retaliation; whatever Excesses they have committed, are in a great Measure to be imputed to the Monitor. Even the Writer of this Paper, if, heated by his Subject, he hath expressed his Sentiments in a Language, which perhaps his cooler Judgement will hereafter disapprove, yet he expects from the Candour of the Publick, that some part of his

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Fault, such are the Laws of Aggression and Retaliation, shall be imputed to the Writers, who opened this illiberal Contest. But at what a Time did they open it? Let us found our future Judgement upon Matters of Fact, that firmest Foundation for all human reasoning.

HIS M——Y had put an end to the last Session of Parliament with every Expression of Grace and Favour to the Representatives of his People. He had dismissed them with the *fullest Persuasion, that they would continue to diffuse in their several Counties that Spirit of Harmony and Concord, which they had so steadily exerted in Parliament.* * Never did a British Sovereign and his People part from each other with fairer Appearances of that mutual Confidence and Affection, which must always render us formidable to our Enemies. The Levees, that waited on the first Lord of the Treasury to congratulate his Entrance into his

* See the King's Speech.

new Employment, and profess their Approbation of his M——y's Choice, were in an uncommon Degree splendid and numerous. The Nation seemed to feel the happy Effects of this Union, and chearfully resolved to bear the Burthen of the War, in firm Persuasion, that however ardently his M——y wished for Peace, (strong proof, at once, both of his Wisdom and Humanity) yet no other Conditions, but those of Honour and Advantage to Great Britain would ever be accepted.

SUCH was the Situation of our domestick Affairs; such the universal Harmony and Concord, when lo! the Monitor! He quits his weekly Blasphemy of quoting the Bible for Texts of Slander and Sedition. He now grows learned, and gives us a Quotation from Tacitus, with the Character of Tiberius, and the name of Sejanus (to shew its Importance) in capital Letters. From this Paper hath proceeded all that Malevolence, Invective, Scurrility, Falsehood and Defamation,

mation, that have been lately published under the Name of Liberty, and the uncontrollable Privileges of the Press.

It is not most amazing, that such a prodigious Quantity of Mischief should be contained in one little Drop of Ink, and then, by its own instinctive Spirit, conveyed into the Hearts and Vitals of his M——y's Subjects. Calumny, like matter, it seems, may be divided *in infinitum*. Yet so prodigious is the Subtlety and Activity of poisons, that an Author, who has made, or at least seems inclinable to make some curious Experiments on the Powers and Effects of thole of a political Kind, assures us, *that Infection of a certain Species may be communicated by the Touch*. He then, goodnatured, charitable Creature! informs the Publick, that a Person is lately arrived from the Highlands, who with a Touch can corrupt the whole Mass of Blood in the soundest English Constitution; and our Author, in honourable Imitation, I presume

sume of this great Artist, proposes to touch the Nation every Saturday with a new Species of political Poison.

BUT let us try this reasoning upon Aggression and Retaliation, by another kind of Proof. The King of Prussia, like the Monitor, for Truth and Justice do not found their reasoning on the Distinctions of Persons, or Stations, broke in upon the Hour of Peace and Tranquility. Descending like a northern Tempest, sudden and resistless, he burst upon the Territories of a Prince, who in reliance on the *once* sacred Faith of Treaties, was totally unprepared and defenceless. He seized upon the Capital of those Territories, and there very *happily* found among its Archives, or, at least, is said to have found, (for the Fact is denied) those Papers, by which he *justified* the precipitate Step he had taken, before he found them. * Or if the Reader

* Both Vienna and Dresden contradicted this Fact.

pleases, he may form his Judgement of this Transaction, upon the Manner, in which a late Writer, certainly not prejudiced against that Monarch, hath represented it. “ The King of Prussia, consulting the Rules of Policy, more than those of Politeness, made himself Master of the Archives at Dresden; in doing which some Roughness was used towards the Queen; but he made himself amends for the Clamour *industriously* raised upon this *Pretence*, by acquiring the Originals of those Pieces, which *evinced* to the world the *reality* of the Design against him, and which therefore *in a great Measure* justified the means he had taken to come at them, as well as the *extraordinary Severity* he used towards the Saxons.” I have printed some particular Expressions of this Quotation in Italicks, as better deserving the Reader’s Attention. The rest I recommend to his Reflections.

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I SHOULD very sincerely pity this Writer, for he has the Feelings of Humanity, and a Sense of the Miseries of his Fellow-Creatures, if he had been obliged to attend his *Hero*, so he frequently calls him, in his second triumphal Entry into Dresden. He would have seen the Suburbs of that Capital, which form one of the finest Towns in Europe, the Seat of all the politer Arts, and richest Manufactures, still smoking from the Fires, which the direful Necessity of War had kindled. Would not such a Sight have filled the Bosom of an human Creature with Compassion, with Earnestness to relieve, to succour, to redress, at least the Calamities, which his own fatal Ambition had caused? No, this Monarch is an *Hero*; that is, a Being, superior to the Weaknesses of Humanity. But I am not his Historian, or obliged to follow him in the Paths of Cruelty and Desolation, through which he takes his Progress. Let me therefore give this Affair to my Readers in the favourable and palliating Language of the very judi-

clous, and, in general, very candid Writer, I have lately quoted. Neither, indeed, even in this Instance, does he wholly want his usual Candour.

“ THE King of Prussia, when he had a
 “ second Time driven the Austrians and
 “ Imperialists out of Saxony, *resolved to keep*
 “ *no Measures with that unhappy Country.*
 “ He declared, that he no longer con-
 “ sidered it as a Deposit, but as a Country,
 “ which he had twice subdued by his
 “ Arms. But if the King of Prussia had
 “ a Right, as, *perhaps*, he had, to consider
 “ Saxony as a *lawful* Conquest, he certainly
 “ *seemed* not to consider the People, as
 “ Subjects, when he continued to exact the
 “ most severe Contributions, and in a Man-
 “ ner too *very little becoming* a lawful So-
 “ vereign; for he surrounded the Exchange
 “ with Soldiers, and confining the Mer-
 “ chants in narrow Lodgings on straw Beds,
 “ he obliged them, by *extreme Sufferings*,
 “ to draw Bills on their foreign Correspon-
 “ dents

" dents for very large Sums. This City
 " had been quite exhausted by former Pay-
 " ments, and had not long before suffered
 " military Execution.——To *retaliate* on
 " these miserable People *some part* of the
 " Cruelties, committed by the Russians, on
 " his Dominions, *seems* to be very *unrea-*
 " *sonable*, as it is but too obvious, that the
 " Barbarity of that People could not be
 " restrained, however it might be exasper-
 " rated by the *total Destruction of Saxony*.
 " Such Retaliations are *odious and cruel*.
 " We heartily wish we could praise the
 " King of Prussia, as much for his tem-
 " perate Use of his Conquest, as for those
 " *wonderful and heroick Qualities*, by which
 " he obtained it." ANNUAL REGISTER.
 " I Vol. pag. 64.

SUCH is the hesitating, unwilling Judge-
 ment, which this Writer pronounces upon
 the Horrors, committed by his Hero. They
 were committed under his own Direction.
 He was himself the Executioner of this hor-
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rid Scene. His *confining the Merchants, &c.* was the very same Species of Cruelty, with that of Calcutta. Why is the Nabob alone called a Barbarian? Yet our Historian *wishes he could praise—Perhaps he had a Right—He certainly seemed—Very little becoming—To retaliate some part of the Cruelties, &c.—Seems very unreasonable.* Are the Laws of Cruelty, then, to be settled by the Frederician Code? Does the Retaliation of Cruelty only *seem unreasonable*? But not the King of Prussia's was this miserable Right of Retaliation of Cruelty.

It might have been somewhat more speciously pleaded by the Russians, for the *total Destruction of Saxony*. Neither should he have exercised this Right against an unhappy People, to whom he had promised his Protection. Should not their past, their present, Miseries, of which he was indisputably the sole Cause, have pleaded for them against these added Cruelties? Let the Reader consult his own Heart,

Heart, and then answer this Question. Let him reflect, that uncommon Abilities, such as those with which this Monarch is unquestionably endowed, were given for the Preservation and Happiness of Mankind. Are they not, then, most impiously perverted, when employed in their Misery and Destruction? Shall the Possessor of them be called GREAT? Indeed, he might as justly be called THE GOOD, that noblest Title, given to the BEST OF SOVERIGNS by an happy and a grateful People.

YET these are the Qualities, as it seems, that demand our Wonder? Yes, and our Indignation, and our Horrour. Such, it is confessed, have been the Heroes of all Ages, and the same their Character, from the *iracundus, inexorabilis, acer* Achilles, to the present Destroyer of the North. We might almost imagine, that Cruelty was an innate Principle in this extraordinary Species of Mortals, if indeed they will condescend to be called Mortals: that it descends,

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improved and cultivated, in a kind of hereditary Line. Achilles dragged the dead Body of Hector round the Walls of Troy. Alexander bored the Ancles of the brave and gallant Betis; *per talos etiam spirantis lora trajecta sunt.* Then, exulting in the *Achilleum facinus*, and his Descent from Homer's Hero, he dragged the *living* Betis, tied to his Chariot, round the Walls of Gaza. Charles the 12 had his Patcul, and the King of Prussia his Dresden, to exercise this Virtue of Heroes. Happy for Mankind, that they appear, such is the Goodness of Providence, as seldom as Comets, *That from their horrid Hair shake Pestilence and War.* Yet happiest for these Nations, that their Sovereign disclaims these tremendous Qualities, which our Historian calls *wonderful and heroick*: that he is contented with the humble Virtues of Goodness, Mercy and Justice, which have rendered Him beloved and revered by his People.

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To this Hero, and to an Alliance with his Virtues the political Wisdom of a noble Duke and his Ministry sacrificed our natural and ancient Connections with the House of Austria; threw her imperial Majesty into the Arms of France, or as She herself, with the Spirit and Delicacy of her Sex expressed it to our Ambassador, *point entre les bras, mais à coté de la France*; turned the Swords of Germans, in horrid civil War, and mutual Destruction, against each other, and totally desolated a Country, which was the only Balance of Power upon the Continent against the Ambition of France. But what Equivalent did our Ministry propose to themselves, for the Allies they lost by this Alteration of our ancient System, and their Engagements in this new Alliance? When Mr. Mitchell desired to know, in case his M——y were attacked in any part of his Dominions, or in case a Rebellion should be raised in favour of the Pretender, what Troops the King of Prussia could furnish either to

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Great Britain or Ireland, He answered, He could not furnish any Troops to England in either of the supposed Cases, without being first assured of his own Security with regard to Russia, and an Alliance with Holland for covering Cleves from the Insults of the French, and Austrians. *These absolute y necessary Articles being first establisshed, ces prealables etablis*, he could then furnish to the King of Great Britain *seven* Battalions, consisting of *five thousand* Men, and pay the rest in *Subsidies*, according to the proportions to be regulated and stated between the high contracting Parties.

HIS Majesty's proposing to pay Subsidies to the King of Great Britain, & *Lui payer le rest en subsidies*, has something so truly ridiculous, that it is hardly possible to preserve the Respect of Countenance, due to an Ally, who is able and *willing* to assist us, if we are invaded, with five thousand Men. But though, from a Conscience of his own *Heroism*, he always
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shewed an Air of Impatience whenever money was mentioned, yet he very obligingly subdued this heroick Spirit; yielded to our most humble and earnest Solicitations, and accepted a Subsidy, the largest ever given by this Crown. He condescended to accept it, without stipulating any one Advantage to this Nation for it. On the contrary, by the Treaty, that gave it Him, we are bound to continue the War, during his pleasure. This assertion is so true, that, if the French, in the last Negotiation, had accepted every Article of the British Offers, except that, which concerned the Town of Wesel, the Prussian VETO would have prevented the Peace. This indeed was one of the *honourable* Conditions, granted by a late Minister, who would be thought most jealous of the Glory of his Country.

To the King of Prussia, and to his fatal Advice, we are indebted for all our continental Engagements. He had been many

Years confidered by his late Majesty, who knew him well, his Genius, Abilities and Integrity, as a dangerous Enemy, and an uncertain, if not an unfaithful Ally. Yet in the Year 1756, some Months before he marched into Saxony, he entered into our Councils; and assumed that Authority over our Ministers, which a stronger Understanding naturally holds over a weaker. He advised the King, and his Advice unhappily prevailed, to take as many Germans, as possible, into his Pay. Thus an Army of forty or fifty thousand Men was formed; an Object rather of certain Victory, than Terror, to the French. Had the King of Prussia proposed to strengthen this Army with five and twenty thousand British Troops, the Proposal might have startled our Ministers into common Sense; it might have awed the French from entering Germany. But this Measure was reserved for the various Politicks of another Minister.

THE Convention of Closter-seven removed every Pretext for our embarking in the
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German War, and they, who encouraged the late King to break that Treaty, wantonly plunged the Nation into all those Difficulties, under which it labours at this Moment. The King of Prussia was again solicited to give us a General, a Circumstance most injurious to the Honour of the Nation, for which we are indebted to our favourite Minister, and thus an Army, paid by Britain, was put into the Hands of that Prince. Commanded by a Prussian General it was no longer amenable to the Power of this Country, or subject to the Direction of this Government. The Expence of supporting it was without a possibility of Controul, and the Operations of it appear, in a great Measure, to have been in the same Situation. Does the Reader demand a Proof of this Assertion? In October 1759, Prince Ferdinand detached twelve thousand of his best Troops to the Assistance of the King of Prussia, under the command of the hereditary Prince, who marched three hundred Miles in the Severity of almost Winter.

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This Measure was executed without the Consent, or even the Knowledge of his late Majesty, and he repented it in vain.

YET our Minister did not repent this Indignity. He probably thought it an Instance of that Heroism, he had been used to admire. He may possibly think it another Instance of Heroism, and worthy of his Admiration, that the Prussian Monarch, if a thousand Circumstances do not deceive us, is at this Instant forming a Party against the Administration: that his Agents supply our political Writers with Hints and Materials and Characters: that they fill our Newspapers with Advertisements of Falshood and Malignity, which they afterwards send to the Newswriters in Holland, as Facts of Importance, and that one particular Person, whose Station here is little fitted for such an Office, is wholly employed in these low Intrigues. It is however confessed, that this Person's Education; the meaness of his former Life; his Industry and Abilities, eminently qualify him for these

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honourable and honest Intrigues. But what shall be said of a Prince, who encourages a Faction against our Administration, and dares to interfere in the Domestick and Internal of our Government?

YET some there are, who, dazzled by the Splendour of Heroism, have blamed our Ministry for withdrawing the Prussian Subsidy. On the contrary, we may venture to affirm, that neither the Honour, nor Interest of the Nation could pay it any longer. It was paid even to the most punctual Faith of Treaties. His Majesty had *accepted* this mighty Subsidy, only to support him against the Russians. We were told, *He was not only able to cope with all his other Enemies, but even to send us the formidable Succour of seven Battalions.* The Russians were no longer his Enemies, they were become his Friends, and we had a new, additional Enemy, Spain, to contend with. Why were we to give Money, which we could very ill spare, to a Prince, who had told us, that if Russia were not his Enemy, he should

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not want it? Yet not only Russia, but Sweden too had ceased to be his Enemies. Neither was there one Stranger in Germany, except the French, whom we, at a most enormous Expence, and unassisted by Him, hindered from attacking him, if indeed, which I very much doubt, they were ever disposed to attack him. Another Reason, which I believe had an Influence on our Ministry, was a just and reasonable Disdain of the ignominious Treaty, our Minister had made with that Prince. And what an Ally? One, who when we had made for him a Treaty, which gave him Silesia; when we had garranteed it to him, yet the very next Year, if not a very few Months afterwards, marched into Bohemia and laid Siege to Prague, with less Pretence, than even Spain now attacks Portugal. The true Reason was to assist France, and to recall Prince Charles from Alsace, in Violation of a Treaty, made to enable the Queen of Hungary, as our Ally, to attack France. But the Treaty with the King of Prussia in 1756

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was meant to maintain Peace in Germany, and was only a League to keep Strangers out of it. Another Minister carried it to Extremes, at once dishonourable and destructive.

I HAVE been tempted into this long Digression, not only by the Importance of the Subject, and the reasoning attending it, but that I might give an incontestible Proof of my not being an Enemy to the LIBERTY of the PRESS. That it is capable of producing great Good can never be denied. Let us therefore preserve it in its largest Extent. Let us endeavour to enlarge its Power of doing good, and then hand it down, with all its legal, rational Privileges to our Posterity. But since it is confessedly capable of producing much Mischief, let it be restrained by that power of Law, which marks the Boundaries of the Prerogatives, and, in all other Instances, the Rights of the People. Why should not the Wisdom of the Legislature, to which we intrust all other our dearest Interests, be allowed to make the Press (so liable to be abused, so capable of being

rendered mischievous to Society) an Object of its Attention? With regard to the noble Lord, who has been the principal Mark of its Licentiousness, he ought not to know, and I really believe, he hardly knows there are such Writers in the World, as the Monitor and the North Briton. He should not only be able, with a strong Eye, to look into Futurity, but he should be attentive to direct, command, create those Events, which determine the Fate of Nations. These Objects are alone worthy of his Attention, and while he can rely with an unshaken Firmness of Mind, upon the Consciousness of his own Integrity, he may depend upon the Assistance of all good Men, he may safely treat with Contempt the Virulence of our *Patriot* Writers, and hear, without being alarmed, the Clamours of an uninformed, ill-judging Multitude, or even see the Addresses of our Citizens, the CIVIUM PRAVA JUBENTIUM.

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